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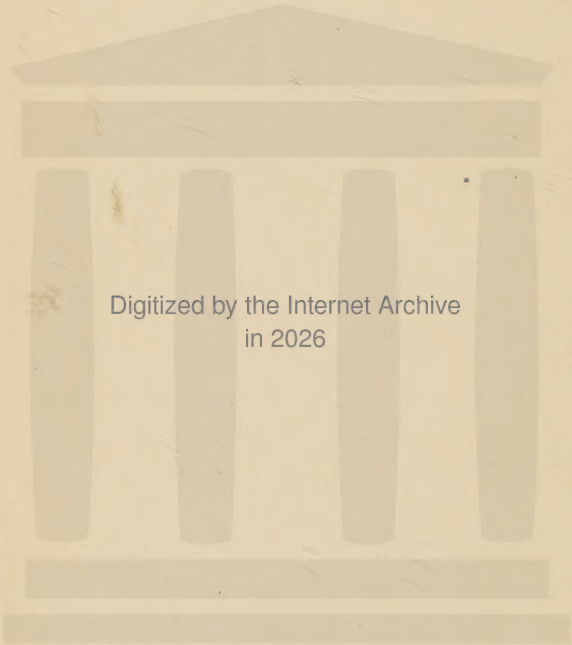
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THE PAYCOCKES OF COGGESHALL

THOMAS PAYCOCKE

From the painting by Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale

142.672

THE PAYCOCKES OF COGGESHALL

BY

EILEEN POWER

GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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"Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.

The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through His great power from the beginning. . . .

Rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations:

All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times."

Ecclesiasticus xliv.

PREFACE

THIS book has been a labour of love. It remains to me only to make acknowledgment to those works which have helped me in performing it. On the clothiers and the woollen industry in general I have often consulted the following books: W. J. Ashley, *Introduction to English Economic History* (1909 ed.), in which is incorporated his earlier monograph on *The Early History of the Woollen Industry in England*; E. Lipson, *An Introduction to the Economic History of England* (1905), vol. i., and L. F. Salzmann, *English Industries of the Middle Ages* (1913). For the Paycockes and Coggeshall I am deeply indebted (especially in Chapter II.) to Mr. G. F. Beaumont, F.S.A., whose paper on *Paycocke's House, Coggeshall, with some Notes on the Families of Paycocke and Buxton* (reprinted from the *Transactions of the Essex Archæological Soc.*, vol. ix. Part V.), and *History of Coggeshall* (1890) must always be the starting-point for investigators of Paycocke history.

For the Buxton pedigree and early history I have consulted Charles Louis Buxton, *The Buxtons of Coggeshall* (1910). But my main guides have naturally been the wills which are preserved in Somerset House, the delightful Thomas Deloney for lighter moments, and above all the house, where have spent so many happy summer days.

EILEEN POWER

May 1920

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(*From the Painting by* ELEANOR FORTESCUE BRICKDALE.)

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THE PAYCOCKES OF COGGESHALL AND THEIR HOUSE

CHAPTER I

THE CLOTHIERS OF ENGLAND

Among all Crafts this was the onely chiefe, for that it was the greatest merchandize, by the which our Country became famous thorowout all Nations.—*The Pleasant Historie of Thomas of Reading.*

THE great and noble trade of clothmaking has left many traces upon the life of England, architectural, literary, social, even constitutional. It has filled our country-side with magnificent Perpendicular churches; those churches it has often enough filled with brasses, whereon woolpacks, shears, and merchants' marks bear proud testimony to a dead man's profession. It has filled our popular literature with old wives' tales of the worthies of England, in which the clothiers, Thomas of Reading and Jack of Newbury, rub elbows with Robin Hood and Friar Bacon. It has filled our shires and towns with gentlemen, for, as Defoe observed in the early eighteenth century, "many of the great families who now pass for gentry in the western counties have been originally raised from and built up by this truly noble manufacture."

Nay, it has even filled the seat of the Chancellor of England with a woolsack, to show how all the greatness of England once rested upon it. Let a cotton-spinning, ironworking generation pay homage to the glorious past of Cloth.

In early days not cloth, however, but wool was the main basis of English wealth. The wool which grew on the backs of English sheep was the finest in Europe, but at first native clothmakers used it but little. It was exported to the Netherlands, where a thousand looms in Bruges and Ypres and Ghent wove it into cloth, which went the length and breadth of Europe. The Englishman of the early Middle Ages wore a coat of English wool, but it had been woven in Flanders. In these days the wool trade was the basis of English wealth; she exported raw materials rather than manufactures, and the great merchant company of staplers grew rich and battened on the wool trade. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there grew up, thrust between gentry and peasant of a more primitive day, a middle class of capitalists, whose wealth was drawn from trade. Some traded, like the mercers and the grocers, in Eastern luxuries, some in fish, some in other wholesale commodities, but ever among the wealthiest and the most respected, mayors of London and provincial ports, contractors and moneylenders to an impecunious king, were to be found the staplers, who traded in wool. "O wool, noble dame," cries the poet Gower in the fourteenth century, "you are the goddess of merchants, to serve you they are all ready; you make some mount to the heights of riches and fortune, and you cause others to fall

to ruin. O wool, Christians as well as pagans and Saracens seek to have you and confess to you. O wool, we ought not to keep silent about your doings in strange lands ; for the merchants of all countries, in time of peace, in time of war, come to seek for you because of their great love ; for whoever else has his enemies, you are never without good friends, who have given themselves to your service for your profit ; you are cherished throughout the world. . . . O beautiful, O white, O delightful one, the love of you stings and binds, so that the hearts of those who make merchandize of you can never escape you ; many a scheme they hatch, many a trap they lay to catch you ; they make you cross the sea, queen of their navy, and in order to get you, envy and covetousness hie them to bargain for you." [1]

But all the English wool was not exported, and from early times cloth was made in England and some even made for export. The scarlets and greens of Stamford and Lincoln were shipped abroad from Boston and Ipswich in the thirteenth century, and travelled as far as Venice.[2] It was the policy of the English kings to encourage foreign weavers, who would teach the English their arts. A crowd of skilled Flemings came in the train of William the Conqueror and his Flemish wife, and perhaps taught the English how to organize their craft into gilds, for the earliest craft gilds in

[1] Translated from Gower's *Mirour de l'omme*, by A. R. Benham, *English Literature from Widsith to the Death of Chaucer* (1916), pp. 250–1.

[2] L. F. Salzmann, *English Industries of the Middle Ages* (1913), pp. 138–9.

England are found among the fullers and weavers. Later, under Edward III, there was another influx of skilled clothmakers from the Netherlands, under the special protection of the Crown, and the English cloth manufacture throve under the impetus. Good sentimental Fuller, the friend of Pepys, writing his *Church History* in the seventeenth century, makes a deviation to paint a picture of these immigrations; if the subject should seem irrelevant to church history, he says, "It would not grieve one to go a little out of the way, if the way be good, as this digression is for the credit and profit of our country."

> "The intercourse now being great betwixt the English and the Netherlands (increased of late since King Edward married the daughter of the Earl of Hainault), unsuspected emissaries were employed by our king into those countries, who wrought themselves into familiarity with such Dutchmen as were absolute masters of their trade, but not masters of themselves, as either journeymen or apprentices. These bemoaned the slavishness of these poor servants, whom their masters used rather like Heathens than Christians, yea rather like horses than men. Early up and late in bed and all day hard work and harder fare (a few herrings and mouldy cheese), and all to enrich the churls, their masters, without any profit to themselves. But oh, how happy should they be, if they would but come over into England, bringing their mystery with them, which would provide their welcome in all places. Here they should

feed on fat beef and mutton, till nothing but their fulness should stint their stomachs. Yea, they should feed on the labour of their own hands, enjoying a proportionable profit of their pains to themselves. Liberty is a lesson quickly conned by heart, men having a principle within themselves to prompt them in case they forget it. Persuaded with the promises, many Dutch servants leave their masters and make over to England. Their departure thence (being picked here and there) made no sensible vacuity, but their meeting here altogether amounted to a considerable fulness. With themselves they brought over their trade and their tools, namely, such as could not yet be so conveniently made in England. Happy the yeoman's house into which one of these Dutchmen did enter, bringing industry and wealth along with them. Such who came in strangers within their doors, soon after went out bridegrooms and returned sons-in-law, having married the daughters of their landlords, who first entertained them. Yea, these yeomen, in whose houses they harboured, soon proceeded gentlemen, gaining great estates to themselves, arms and worshp to their estates." [1]

The details of this doubtless owe much to the imagination of Fuller. The craftsmen who came from Flanders were usually, as royal letters of protection show, masters themselves in a large way

[1] Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain* (1837 edition), i. pp. 418–9.

of business, followed by a band of apprentices and journeymen. Moreover, it is to be feared that records give us a picture of hostility between native and alien craftsmen very different from the romance here so seductively described. But the wealth and industry brought by the Flemings in the fourteenth century is no exaggeration.

For this and other reasons the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed the rapid growth of the cloth manufacture in England. The English manufacturers soon began to rival those of the Netherlands in the making of fine cloth ; as witness Chaucer's " Wife of Bath " :

> Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
> She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

The Government showed itself disposed to protect the new industry by forbidding the export of wool and sometimes the import of cloth, and gradually the staplers found themselves rivalled on the sea by a new company of Merchant Adventurers, who throve by exporting not raw wool, but finished cloth. With the development of the manufacture a change, too, began to take place in its organization ; the craft gild system, which had appeared first of all in the cloth industry, disappeared first in that industry ; for the growth of industrial, as distinct from commercial, capitalism is closely bound up with growth of the cloth manufacture. It is of the essence of the gild system that every master craftsman is at once capitalist and worker, manufacturer and merchant ; he buys his own raw material and sells in his own shop the finished product of his labour. It is of the essence of the gild system also that there is no permanent wage-

earning class; the apprentice who has trained for seven years under a master is himself qualified to set up as a master; he may have to work for a few years as a journeyman for wages, in order to accumulate capital to set up shop, but he has no thought of remaining permanently as a servant hired at a wage. But the gild system never existed in all the perfection of its ideal, and the more its history is investigated, the more the historical theories of both William Morris on the one hand and the Gild Socialists on the other are shown to be a dream. In some towns gilds flourished, while in others they were already breaking down before a nascent capitalism. Some trades were organized as real industrial democracies; others show a strong cleavage between labour and capital almost from the first.

The cloth industry was one of the earliest to show this cleavage. It was a difficult industry to organize on a gild basis, because the making of a piece of cloth entailed so many distinct processes. The preliminary processes of spinning and carding were always by-industries, performed by women in their cottages; but the weavers who bought the spun yarn had their own gild, and so had the fullers who fulled it. Both could not sell the finished piece of cloth; sometimes the weavers employed the fullers, sometimes the fullers the weavers; the crafts were closely dependent on each other, and one at least had no direct dealings with the public. Moreover, since weaving is a much quicker process than spinning, the weaver often wasted much time and found it hard to collect enough yarn to keep his loom busy. And as the

market for cloth grew wider, and was no longer confined to the town of the weaver, the need was felt for some middleman to specialize in the selling of the finished cloth. So by degrees there grew up a class of men who bought wool in large quantities and sold it to the weavers; and then by a natural transition began, not to sell the wool outright, but to deliver it to the weavers to weave and to the fullers to full at a wage, receiving it back again when the work was done. These men grew rich; they amassed capital; they could set many folk at work. At length we find them employing spinners, carders, weavers, fullers, shearers—all the different workers who combined to make a finished piece of cloth. These workers sit in their own homes and each does his appointed task; but, unlike the master-craftsman of the gild, none owns the raw material on which he works, nor the finished product of his labour. These belong to a capitalist middleman. Moreover, there appears also a class of men who deal not in the industry, but in the trade of cloth, buying wholesale and selling wholesale. As the market for English cloth grew and grew, so the need for these capitalist middlemen grew. The industrial middleman was called a clothier; the mercantile middleman a draper; and the old independent gild craftsman became a hired worker. He differed from the factory hand of our own day only in the fact that he worked in his own home and owned his own simple tools; but, like the factory hand, he was paid a wage for his labour and not a price for his goods.

The clothiers of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries grew rapidly in wealth and

importance, and in certain parts of the country, particularly in the west and the east, they became the backbone of the middle class. They pursued their activities in country villages rather than in the old corporate towns, for they wished to avoid the restrictions of the town gilds. The men who worked for them wished to avoid those restrictions too; for the gilds had grown narrow and selfish, and many young men found themselves bound to work for ever for wages in the shops of a few rich masters, who strove, by keeping others from setting up shop, to enhance their own profits. Many boys could not pay the high fees now demanded from apprentices, and many journeymen could not pay the fee nor give the feast demanded from all who set up shop as masters. They were willing to work in their own homes for the clothiers rather than for the grasping masters in their workshops; and in the suburbs of towns and in country villages many looms and dye-vats were set up. Gradually the cloth industry migrated almost entirely to the country, where the clothier employers sent round their servants with bales of wool to be spun by the women in the cottages, and then taken in turn to all the other craftsmen and brought away as bales of finished cloth, to be sold to drapers in the markets of county towns, and to find their way to Bakewell Hall, the great cloth market of London, and so across the sea by many a port in the south and east of England. The cloth industry of the west of England and of East Anglia was carried on by clothiers on this outwork system right up to the moment when the Industrial Revolution swept it out of the cottages into the

factories and out of the south into the north. Then thriving villages emptied themselves, and the hum of the spinning-wheel was no longer heard through the open door. Of all this industry and this busy population there remained nothing but the great churches, upon which a wanderer in East Anglia comes with surprise, in the midst of small villages, whose inhabitants are too few to fill those wide naves, those spacious aisles. They were built in a distant day by clothiers who had grown rich on a 'truly noble manufacture'; and they were built to house the swarm of spinners, weavers, fullers, dyers, and shearers who once populated these half-empty villages of the south of England, where now the typical figure is the slow agricultural labourer, instead of the quick-witted, quick-fingered weaver.

The clothiers were not by any means universally popular. There was a great outcry in the corporate towns that their prosperity was being ruined by the competition of the new rural industry, and the Tudor sovereigns were forced by legislation to try and improve the position of the old towns, where the cloth industry was still organized on gild lines, as compared with that of the new villages, where it was organized on the outwork system. Moreover, the workpeople who were paid by the clothiers for spinning, or weaving, or fulling, sometimes found themselves at odds with their masters; the struggle between capital and labour has set in for ever when men are paid for their work and not for the product of their work. There are complaints which strike an extraordinarily modern note. The clothiers are charged with

truck; a statute in 1464 (one of many) recites that labourers in the cloth industry are driven to take a great part of their wages in pins, girdles, and other unprofitable wares, and orders the clothiers to pay their workfolk in lawful money for their lawful wages.[1] Moreover, something like an embryo factory system began very early to appear. The clothiers began to collect looms in their own houses and collect weavers there to work at them for a wage. In this way an eye could be kept on raw material and an honest day's work exacted. Most of the greater clothiers probably had a spinning-house or weaving-house attached to their dwelling-places. Sometimes the numbers thus employed were very great. Legend, doubtless untruthful, told that Jack of Newbury employed two hundred looms in his own house; and in 1546, the traveller Leland noted that a famous clothier, Stumpe of Malmesbury, had rented Osney Abbey after the dissolution of the monks, and "at this present time every corner of the vast houses of office that belonged to the abbey be full of looms to weave cloth in: . . . there be made now every year in the town three thousand cloths."[2]

These methods were sometimes injurious to the workers. The preamble to the great *Weavers' Act* of 1555 describes how "the Weavers of this Realm have complained that the rich and wealthy Clothiers do many ways oppress them, . . . some by setting up and keeping in their houses divers looms and keeping and maintaining them by journeymen and persons unskilful, to the decay of a great

[1] E. Lipson, *op. cit.* pp. 424 ff.
[2] *Ib.* p. 421.

number of Artificers, which were brought up in the said Science of Weaving, their Families and Household; . . . some by ingrossing of Looms into their hands and possession and letting them out at such unreasonable Rents, as the poore Artificers are not able to maintain themselves, much less their Wives, Family and Children; . . . some also by giving much less wages and hire for the weaving and workmanship of cloth than in times past they did."[1] The framers of the Act were, however, more concerned with putting down the competition of the country clothiers for the sake of the old corporate towns than with crushing capitalism, and contented themselves with limiting the number of looms which might be kept by a country clothier, while leaving the clothier who lived in a corporate town to do as he liked. Still, the Act may have done something to postpone the emergence of a factory system of industry in England. The main cause why such a system did not become general until the Industrial Revolution is that while tools are still simple, and the power used to work them is human, men can still labour conveniently in their own homes. It was the combination of expensive machines and steam power which produced the factory system.

It must be admitted, therefore, that the clothiers sometimes showed some of the worse traits of capitalism. Yet the traces they have left behind them are not all so derogatory. The churches which they built reflected more nobly their new-

[1] For this Act see Bland, Brown, and Tawney, *English Economic History, Select Documents* (1914), pp. 329–33.

found wealth and self-respect, those lofty and splendid churches, with beautiful windows and side chapels in which a new 'cloth' family could be for ever kept in mind. The very architecture was *nouveau riche*, like those who paid for it; the elaborate ornament and sumptuous detail of the Perpendicular style now took the place of the simple majesty of Early English architecture. But it was the ostentation without the vulgarity of wealth; the clothiers of England can never be forgotten so long as the churches of Newbury and Lavenham remain to commemorate them. Inside the churches the noble trade is commemorated too. It was perhaps in connexion with the wool trade that the art of sepulchral brasses first came to England. The material employed, an alloy of copper known as *latten*, was for the most part manufactured at Cologne in the Middle Ages; the plates used were imported to England from North Germany and Flanders from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and they were not manufactured in this country until the latter half of the sixteenth century. In North Germany and Flanders the English traders in wool must have seen and admired the magnificent brasses, which abounded in the churches of those parts; they were fain to have such memorials themselves. Thus it is that the eastern counties, the centre of the wool trade and then of the cloth manufacture, are particularly rich in brasses. Thus it is also that there are in Gloucestershire, one of the wool districts of the west, so many brasses to wool merchants. At Chipping Camden lies William Grevel with his wife, "quondam civis London' et

flos mercatorum lanarum tocius Anglie," who died in 1401. At Northleach lies Thomas Fortey, 'woolman' (1447), and John Fortey, 'woolman,' with his right foot on a sheep and his left on a woolsack (1458); likewise William Scots, tailor, with a pair of shears beneath his feet (1447), and another unknown wool merchant, with his feet on a woolpack, while his wife lies like a lady, a lap-dog on her skirt (*c.* 1400). At Linwood lies John Lyndewode, 'woolman,' feet on woolpack, the father of the famous author of the *Provinciale*, and John Lyndewode, 'woolman' (1421), his other less learned son, whose woolpack bears a merchant's mark. At Cirencester lies Robert Pagge, also with a merchant's mark upon his woolsack, and other woolmen lie at Chipping Norton, at Lechdale, and at All Hallows, Barking, in London. Probably these were all staplers who traded in wool; but brasses of clothiers are almost as numerous in the eastern counties. The Springs have left their merchant's mark at Lavenham and the Paycockes at Coggeshall.[1]

The clothiers left their mark in literature as well as in architecture, as has already been hinted. Thomas Deloney, that eloquent forefather of the novel, first enshrined them in popular story in the late sixteenth century. Deloney wrote at a time when the English clothiers were at their greatest and most prosperous and when Englishmen were just beginning to be proud of their new commercial

[1] For the connexion of brasses with the wool trade and for notices of brasses erected to 'woolmen' see Herbert Druitt, *A Manual of Costume as Illustrated by Monumental Brasses* (1906), pp. 9, 201, 204, 205, 207, 253.

greatness, so much of which was based on the export of cloth. Though himself, as Nash phrased it, a "balleting silke-weaver of Norwich," he wrote prose as well as rhyme, and was more pleased to praise shoemakers and clothiers than weavers of silk. In 1597 he published *The Pleasant History of John Winchcomb, in his younger days called Jack of Newbery, the famous and worthy Clothier of England*; and about the same time, *Thomas of Reading, or the six worthy Yeomen of the West*, both of which went through several editions before 1600.[1] In these two rambling tales the race of clothiers entered in some sort into the folk-lore of England, with Friar Bacon and Friar Rush, Robin Hood and Guy, Earl of Warwick.

The pleasant Historie of the sixe worthy Yeomen of the West tells of a band of mythical clothiers who lived in Henry VI's reign—six in the west country—Thomas Cole of Reading, Gray of Gloucester, Sutton of Salisbury, Fitzallen of Worcester, Tom Dove of Exeter, and Simon of Southampton—and three in the north—Cuthbert of Kendall, Hogekins of Hallifax, and Martin Byram of Manchester; "euery one of these," says Deloney, "kept a great number of servants at worke, spinners, carders, weauers, fullers, dyers, sheeremen and rowers, to the great admiration of all those that came into their houses to behold them." The story goes on to tell how King Henry was riding with his sons and nobles through the west country to put down a Welsh rising, and how "he met with a great number

[1] See *The Works of Thomas Deloney*, edited by F. O. Mann (1912), nos .ii. and v.

of Waines laden with cloath, comming to London and seeing them still drive one after another so many together, demaunded whose they were. The Waine-men answered in this sort: Coles of Reading (quoth they). Then by and by the King asked another, saying, Whose cloth is all this? Old Cole's (quoth he). And againe anone after he asked the same question to others, and stil they answered, Old Cole's. And it is to be remembred that the King met them in such a place, so narrow and streight, that he with the rest of his traine, were faine to stand as close to the hedge, whilest the carts passed by, the which at that time being in number above two hundred, was neere hand an houre ere the King could get roome to be gone: so that by his long stay, he began to be displeased, although the admiration of that sight did much qualify his furie: but breaking out in discontent, by reason of his stay, he said he thought old Cole had got a commission for all the carts in the country to cary his cloth." The tale goes on that near Staines he was again held up by a string of wains laden with cloth, and when he asked once and again whose they were, the answer was always, "Sutton's of Salisbury"—and "God send me many such Suttons," said the King. After this he sent for the clothiers to court, to do them any favour they might ask, and they requested that all the cloth measures through the land might be the same length, to facilitate their trade, whereupon the King called for a staff, and, measuring the length of his own arm upon it, delivered it to them, saying, "This measure shall bee called a yard, and no other measure throughout all the

Realme of England shall be used for the same." [1]

It is to be feared that Thomas Cole of Reading and his worthy friends are all apocryphal; for the cloth industry, though well established in the time of Henry I, was at a much more primitive stage of its development, and the great clothier capitalists did not appear until at least three centuries later. But the hero of *The Pleasant History of John Winchcomb . . . called Jack of Newbery* is a historical character.[2] He died in 1509 at Newbury, where he built the tower and western part of the parish church, in which his epitaph is still preserved. His will also is extant, and in it he left legacies to the church and to his servants. His cloth was famous abroad as well as at home, for in 1549, when his son was carrying on his business, the English envoy at Antwerp wrote to the Lord Protector Somerset to send over " a thousand of Winchcombe's kersies," in repayment of a loan. He was one of the " Worthies of England " celebrated by Fuller, who thus summarizes the various legends which clustered round his name, and from which Deloney built up his pleasant history: " John Winscombe, called commonly Jack of Newberry, was the most considerable clothier (without fancy or fiction) England ever beheld. His looms were his lands, whereof he kept one hundred in his house, each managed by a man and a boy. In the expedition to Flodden-field, against James, King of Scotland, he marched with an hundred of his own men (as

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 213–5, 226–8.

[2] For the historical John Winchcombe see E. Lipson, *op. cit.* p. 419; W. J. Ashley, *op. cit.* p. 229.

well armed and better clothed than any) to shew that the painful to use their hands in peace, could be valiant and employ their arms in war. He feasted King Henry the Eighth and his first queen Katharine in his own house, extant at Newberry at this day, but divided into many tenements. Well may his house now make sixteen clothiers' houses, whose wealth would amount to six hundred of their estates. He built the church of Newberry from the pulpit westward to the tower inclusively; and died about the year 1520; some of his name and kindred of great wealth still remaining in this country."[1] Another story makes Winchcombe refuse a knighthood, preferring "to rest in his russet coat a poor clothier to his dying day." Some of these legends (such as the march to Flodden Field) have probably no foundation in fact. But John Winchcombe's fame as a clothier is undoubted; and Deloney's little picture of the cloth manufacture carried on at his house is an idyll of the industry not without historical value. It will be quoted later. His fame only grew with the centuries, and in the pageant and procession of the Weavers of Coggeshall in 1791, among "Britannia and her children, Bezaleel and Aholiab, with several branches of the trade at work," among Shepherds and Shepherdesses, Shackle-makers and Loom-makers comes "Jack of Newberry."[2]

The very fact that legends should thus cluster round a clothier shows the importance of the

[1] Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, ed. P. A. Nuttall (1840), i. p. 137.

[2] G. F. Beaumont, *A History of Coggeshall in Essex* (1890), p. 193.

industry. This irruption of the middle class into legend and fairy tale is of immense social significance. In .the fourteenth century lived Richard Whittington, mercer and Lord Mayor of London, who first forced his way into those realms of gold, where none before him save prince or peasant had played the part of hero. Now in the sixteenth century the middle class had come to its own, but it is a manufacturer and not a merchant whose exploits fill ballad and chapbook. Certainly this was a noble trade, which enriched our popular literature with worthies such as Jack of Newbury and Thomas Cole. Save in its reference to the absence of beggars, who abounded in Elizabeth's day, Deloney's description of the cloth industry in Henry I's time is true rather of the sixteenth century, for he spoke of what he saw: "Which Arte in those daies was held in high reputation, both in respect of the great riches that thereby was gotten, as also of the benefite it brought to the whole Commonwealth; the yonger sons of knights and gentlemen, to whom their Fathers would leave no lands, were most commonly preferred to learn this trade, to the end that thereby they might live in good estate and drive forth their days in prosperity. Among all Crafts this was the onely chiefe, for that it was the greatest merchandize, by the which our Country became famous throughout all Nations. And it was verily thought that the one halfe of the people in the land lived in those dayes thereby, and in such good sort, that in the Commonwealth there were few or no beggars at all; poore people, whom God lightly blessed with most children, did by meanes of this occupa-

tion so order them, that by the time they were come to be sixe or seven yeeres of age, they were able to get their owne bread; Idlenesse was then banished our coast, so that it was a rare thing to heare of a thiefe in those dayes. Therefore it was not without cause that Clothiers were then both honoured and loved." [1]

[1] *Deloney's Works*, ed. F. O. Mann, p. 213.

CHAPTER II

THE PAYCOCKES OF COGGESHALL

Some men of noble stock were made, some glory in the murder blade ;
Some praise a Science or an Art, but I like honourable Trade !
JAMES ELROY FLECKER

AT the end of the fifteenth century there lived in the town of Coggeshall a rich family called Paycocke, or, as we should write it and as they sometimes did, Peacock. Coggeshall lies in the great clothmaking district of Essex, of which Fuller wrote : " This country is charactered like Bathsheba, ' She layeth her hand to the spindle and her hands hold the distaffe.' . . . It will not be amiss to pray that the plough may go along and the wheel around, that so (being fed by the one and clothed by the other) there may be, by God's blessing, no danger of starving in our nation." [1] All over Essex there lay villages famous for cloth-making, Coggeshall and Braintree, Bocking and Halstead, Shalford and Dedham, and above all Colchester, the great centre and mart of the trade. The villages throve on the industry. Hardly a cottage which did not hum with the spinning-wheel. Hardly a street where you might not have counted weavers' workshops, kitchens where the rough loom stood by the wall, to occupy the goodman's winter

[1] Thomas Fuller, *The Worthies of England* (1662), p. 318.

leisure, when he could not work in the fields, or more commonly his working hours throughout the year; for weaving, unlike spinning, tends to become a specialized occupation, and field work roughens the weaver's hand. Hardly a week but the clatter of the pack-horse would be heard in the straggling streets, bringing new stores of wool to be worked and taking away the pieces of cloth to the big clothiers of Colchester and the surrounding villages. For in many of these villages there lived well-to-do clothiers, employing most of the inhabitants, glad to escape the restrictions of the industry in the borough town of Colchester, and selling to drapers there, or in London. Throughout the fifteenth century Coggeshall was a thriving centre, second only to the great towns of Norwich, Colchester, and Sudbury in the eastern counties. It is true that its most flourishing period came later, in the sixteenth century, when the so-called 'new drapery,' the famous 'bays and says,' were introduced by Flemings and Walloons into East Anglia.

> Hops, Reformation, Bays and Beer
> Came into England all in a year,

runs the old rhyme; and it was about 1528 that an Italian introduced the manufacture of the fine cloths afterwards renowned as 'Coxall's whites' into Coggeshall.[1] But this was after the

[1] According to Leake, writing about 1577, "About 1528 began the first spinning on the distaffe and making of Coxall clothes. . . . These Coxall clothes weare first taught by one Bonvise, an Italian."—Quoted in *Victoria County History of Essex*, ii. p. 382.

time of Thomas Paycocke ; and even before his time, at the end of the fourteenth century, the aulnager's accounts of the duties on cloth show that there were already capitalist clothiers, keeping large numbers of workmen employed, in Coggeshall.

There were certainly a number of wealthy clothiers in the village during the fifteenth century, and the fine church is one of the marks of their prosperity ; but their names have not come down to us, and it is with one great family that Coggeshall will be connected—the Paycockes, with their aisle and chantry in the church, their brasses, their wills, and their beautiful house. The family had its origin just outside the border of the county at Clare, in Suffolk, and in the first half of the fourteenth century the Paycockes were already people of substance having properties in various Suffolk villages ; and by the middle of the fifteenth century a branch was settled at Coggeshall.[1] From this moment the family can be traced in Coggeshall for about a century and a half. Dead and dry documents and inscriptions often yield enough information to make the people of a bygone day live again. The material for our history of the Paycocke family is meagre enough, a few inscriptions preserved from gravestones, a few wills, a survey ; but their house is a history in itself, and the imagination sees them always standing under a matchless carven ceiling, or sitting in the embrasure of a noble fireplace, with a merchant's mark

[1] For the Paycocke family see the valuable paper by Mr. G. F. Beaumont, F.S.A., on *Paycocke's House, Coggeshall, with Some Notes on the Families of Paycocke and Buxton* (reprinted from the *Transactions of the Essex Archæological Soc.*, vol. ix. pt. v.).

among fantastic animals upon the breastsummer. About the first Coggeshall Paycocke of whom we know, there is little enough to tell; his gravestone (now lost) commemorated Thomas Paycocke *quondam carnifex de Coggeshale*, lately butcher of Coggeshall, who died in 1461, and Christiana, his wife.[1] But, remembering the great industry of Essex and the family of clothiers sprung from his loins, it is hard not to conjecture that this early Thomas was one of those wealthy grazing butchers who were beginning to own large sheep farms in the fifteenth century. It is natural that his descendants should have made cloth, for it was very common for clothiers to own their own farms and to have the wool from the backs of their own sheep made up by the men and women whom they employed; the famous clothier, John Tame, kept large flocks of sheep at Fairford and had the wool made into cloth at Cirencester[2]; and a fifteenth-century *Debate between the Heralds* of France and England says: "In England your clothiers dwell in great farms abroad in the country, where as well they make cloth and keep husbandry, as also graze and feed sheep and cattle."[3] Whether Thomas Paycocke, *carnifax*, owned a grazing farm or made cloth we do not know; but when next we hear of the family it is as clothiers.

[1] See Beaumont, *Paycocke's House*, pp. 3–5, for a description of the Paycocke brasses, including those which are mentioned by various earlier writers on funeral brasses, Weaver, Holman, and A. J. Dunkin, and have since disappeared. For a further account see M. Christy and W. W. Porteous in *Transactions of the Essex Archæological Soc.*, viii. pp. 258–63.

[2] Lipson, *op. cit.* p. 421.

[3] Ashley, *op. cit.* p. 254.

In 1505 an inscription upon a memorial brass (now disappeared) commemorates John Paycocke, whose wife was Emma and who had three sons, John, Robert, and Thomas, and a daughter, Alice. But we have better evidence for him than a tombstone, since his will is still preserved at Somerset House among the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.[1] In the will he is described as "John Pecok of Goggeshall in the Contie of Essex, *bowchar*," but it may be that he also had some connexion with the cloth industry, for we know that two of his sons were clothiers, and among the witnesses to his will were John Ayleward, fuller, of Little Coggeshall, and Robert Creyfeld of Aldham, fuller. He was a man of wealth, owning several houses and properties in Coggeshall and on the road to Colchester; and in the will he makes careful provision for his burial in the parish church of St. Peter in Coggeshall, in the north aisle, before the altar of St. Katharine, and for the due celebration of his burial and month's mind. He orders "a goode honest preest of good and sad conversacion and rule" to be hired, at a stipend of ten marks a year, to say mass and pray daily for his soul and for the souls of his parents, kindred, and good friends for a period of five years; he also leaves a sum of ten shillings each to the houses of friars at Colchester, Clare, Sudbury, and Maldon to say a solemn Dirige and Requiem Mass for these souls; while to Coggeshall Abbey in his own village he bequeaths six shillings for a similar service and the revenues of a certain croft of meadow to pay for the establishment of an annual

[1] *Somerset House*, P.C.C., Adeane, 5.

obit for these souls in St. Peter's Church. From the will his family is seen to consist of his wife, Emma, three sons, John, Robert, and Thomas, and a daughter, Alice. To Emma he leaves (eloquent testimony to the fact that all the wife's possessions are legally the husband's) " all her arrayment, with gurdells, bedes, rynges and all other appareill [that] belongith to hir body," and the occupation of all his household goods and plate during her lifetime, after which they are to be divided equally among his three sons. To his daughter he leaves ten marks for a dowry, and to " Isabell Browne my maide " three shillings and fourpence. The rest of his goods go in equal parts to his three sons.

But it is his houses which chiefly interest us to-day, for in this will there is the first recorded mention of the beautiful house which is the theme of this monograph. John Paycocke mentions three chief houses belonging to him. To his wife he leaves " my house lying and bielded in the church strete of Coggeshall " until her decease, when it was to go to his eldest son, John. To his second son, Robert, he leaves " the house that I dwell yn and all the lond that longeth to the same, called Brasiers, and all my houses lying betwene the brigg in Litell Coggeshall copyhold." To Thomas, his youngest son, he leaves *the* house, " my house lying and bielded in the West strete of Coggeshall afore the vicarage ther . . . to haue and to hold to hym, his heyres and assignez for evermore." In all probability old John had built the house for Thomas and gave it to him upon his marriage with his first wife, Margaret Horrold,

THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE

for the initials M. P. and T. P. occur constantly on the carved woodwork.

From the time of John Paycocke, the family was closely concerned with clothmaking until the death of the last bearer of the name in Coggeshall. Of John's three sons two at least were clothiers, for the funeral inscriptions of Robert Paycocke, who died in 1520, and of Thomas Paycocke, the owner of the house, who died in 1518, gave their calling: "*Pray for the soul of Robert Paycock of Coggeshale, clothmaker, for Elizabeth and Joan his wyfs,*" and "*Here lyeth Thomas Paycock, clothworker, and Margery and Ann his wyf.*" The eldest brother, John, lived longest, and alone of the three his brass still lies in the north aisle of Coggeshall church, bearing the figures of himself and his wife, Joan, and the inscription, "*Orate pro anima Johannis Paycock et Johanne uxor ejus, qui quidem Johannes obiit 2 Aprilis* 1533." The daughter Alice married, as we know from Thomas' will, a man named Uppcher, and had two children, Robert and Margaret.

Of Thomas Paycocke more will be said in the following chapter; his house and his will survive to give us a fuller picture of him than is possible for any other of his kin. Meanwhile it is not uninteresting to trace the fortunes of the family after his death. There is an unfortunate gap in the family history at this point, which makes the construction of their pedigree difficult. Thomas was twice married—to Margaret Horrold and to Ann Cotton. He had apparently no child by the former, and his child by the latter was yet unborn when he died. The eldest brother, John, had a son

of his own name, and Robert had two sons, Thomas and Robert, and a daughter, Emma, who married Robert Buxton. Thomas Paycocke, when he died in 1518, bequeathed his beautiful house and all his other houses and lands to the child, if a son, "that my wife goeth with," when it attained the age of twenty-one years, but if it should die without heirs male, the houses and lands were to go to John, son of the testator's eldest brother, John, and to his heirs male, with remainder to Thomas, son of testator's brother, Robert, and his heirs male, with remainder to Robert, another son of Robert.[1] Was the child a boy, and did he inherit the house? or was it a daughter? It is impossible to say. We only know for certain that in 1575 the house belonged to a John Paycocke; while the house next door, now the Fleece Inn, but then known as 'Draper's' (yet another evidence of the family calling), belonged to a Thomas Paycocke. But here the brass of Thomas Paycocke in Coggeshall church and the will of John Paycocke in Somerset House give some help, for the former records that Thomas was the son of Robert Paycocke and the latter refers to him as 'my cozen.' The probability is that the child of Thomas Paycocke, who died in 1518, had not been a boy, and that the house had duly gone to his nephew, John, son of his eldest brother; that John had had a son, John, who owned the house in 1575, while Thomas, who owned 'Draper's' at that time, was the son of Robert, nephew to our Thomas Paycocke (d. 1518) and second son of his brother, Robert.

[1] See his will (*Somerset House*, P.C.C., Ayloffe, 14) printed in Beaumont, *Paycocke's House, Coggeshall*, App. A, p. 12.

The lack of inventiveness shown by the Paycockes in naming their children makes it difficult to be more exact. At any rate, Thomas Paycocke of Draper's died in 1580, leaving two daughters, Joan and Ann, but no son; and after him in 1584 died, and was followed to the grave a few months later by his widow, Margaret, John Paycocke, "the last of his name in Coxall," as the parish register mournfully records. So the beautiful house passed out of the hands of this great family of clothiers.

A few words should perhaps be said of this Thomas Paycocke who owned the house next to 'Paycocke's.' His brass still remains in Coggeshall church, and his will (a stupendous affair) in Somerset House[1]; and though we should much have preferred the brass and will of John, as owner of the house, we must be thankful for any Paycocke relics snatched from the jaws of time. On the brass Thomas 'is habited' (in the words of Dunkin's *Monumenta Anglicana*) "in a long civil gown with sleeves like those of an M.A. gown, over a tunic girded at the waist, with ruffs at the neck and wrists." His feet rest upon a brass plate bearing the words:

Thou mortall man y^{t} wouldest attayne
The happie haven of heavenly rest,
Prepare thyself: of graces all,
Fayth and repentence are the best.

The marginal inscription (of which all the words after 'w^{ch}' have now vanished) bears the legend: "Here lyeth buried Thomas Peaycocke the sunne of Robert Peaycocke who departed this lyfe the xxiij daye of December 1580 and left behinde him

[1] *Somerset House*, P.C.C., Arundell, 50.

two daughters Johan and Anne w^ch^ Thomas Peaycocke dydd gyve cc pounds to buy land for the continuall relief of the poor of Coxall for ever." From an early eighteenth-century account of the tomb it appears that the diamond-shaped escutcheon over his head then contained the two-stemmed clover, which was the merchant's mark of the Paycockes and occurs so often in the woodwork of the house.[1]

The long will left by Thomas Paycocke gives some interesting information as to his family, his business, and his friends. In the first place, as to the Paycocke family, he mentions the graves of his father and his uncle, Thomas Paycocke (eldest son of the Robert Paycocke who died in 1505); to his cousin, John Paycocke, and to his wife he leaves " to eache of them one goulde Ringe of thirtie shillinges a pece "; and he leaves forty shillings each to his ' brother ' (*i.e.* brother-in-law), " Edmonde Clarke and his wief." Of his own children he naturally speaks more fully; his two surviving daughters were Joan and Ann; Joan married Thomas Tyll and had two sons, Thomas and Ambrose, and two daughters, Judith and Joan; Ann married Richard Bynnyon and had three daughters, Elizabeth, Tabitha, and Ann. His third daughter, Judith, who married Richard Constantyne, predeceased him, leaving a daughter named after her. To his eldest grandson, Thomas Tyll, old Thomas Paycocke seems to have been sincerely attached, and he left him the greater part of his possessions. The will also mentions two ' cousins,' who may have married Paycocke women, though it is impossible to trace their wives—" my

[1] Quoted in Beaumont, *Paycocke's House*, p. 3.

Cozen Robert Mott of Colchester," "my cozin Martin of Clare" (an interesting entry, when we remember the connexions of the family with that town); "Mr. Humfrey Smythe and my Cozen his wief" are also mentioned. But there is no further information about the Paycocke family, now 'petering out,' so to speak, in daughters.

Thomas refers to his own wife, Joan, without giving any clue as to her maiden name. He was not, it would appear, on very good terms with her, for though he makes ample provision for her, it is with the air of one performing a duty, and he seems to anticipate that she will try to set aside his will and claim more for her dower than he is disposed to give her. He leaves her a house and also the sum of a hundred pounds; but the money is left on condition "that she the saide Johan, nor any other for her or in her name, consent or commaundement, shall not at anye tyme or tymes hereafter pretende or make anye title or claime, by reason of her tytle of dower of, in and to anye landes, tenementes or hereditamentes which I have heretofore soulde to any person or persons, or which I am nowe seazed or possessed of, which by this my present testament, I doe give and devise to anye person or persons." Moreover, within a month of her husband's decease Joan was to bind herself to his executors "in one obligacion sufficient in the Lawe of the Summe of Twoe hundred poundes with condicion endorsed" that she would not make any further claim and was to "seele and deliver all such Releases and other writinges as by learned Counsell shalbe devised for thextinguishinge of her said title of Dower" to a person named by his

executors. If she refused she was not to have the hundred pounds, which was to go to the person or persons injured by her claims. Had he died intestate his widow would have had the right to one-third of his possessions as dower; and he perhaps foresaw that she would not consider a house and a hundred pounds the equivalent of this. As for Thomas, his heart was clearly set on his eldest daughter and her husband and on their sons.

Thomas Paycocke himself emerges clearly from the verbiage of his last will and testament. He was a man of considerable property and of many friends; the family had evidently prospered since the days of John Paycocke, 'butcher.' Oddly enough he makes no mention of the house called *Draper's*, unless we may identify it with the house which he left in dower to his wife for the term of her life, "my tenement with the appurtenances called *Cobbes*, scituate and lienge in West Streete in Coggishall aforesaide, which I late boughte of Thomas Colman"; but it is more probable that this was another house in the same street as *Paycocke's* and *Draper's*. Another of his Coggeshall houses was in the occupation of Thomas and Joan Tyll, his son-in-law and daughter, and was left to them, together with the adjoining tenement, for their lives, and after their death to their second son, Ambrose. The house in which Thomas was himself living was evidently large and handsome; he describes it as "my mansion house wherein I nowe dwell, scituate and lienge at the Gravell in Coggeshall aforesaide called Belles and Bruers, or otherwise, with all the houses, edifices, buildinges, yardes and

gardeyns to the same belonginge." This house and the two adjoining tenements, which he had purchased, he leaves to Thomas Tyll, his eldest grandson. The will also sets out very carefully the various lands and tenements which he possessed in Much and Little Coggeshall, on the Earl's Colne road, and in Fering; for any local antiquarian, with an interest in old fields, the will should have considerable charm. The crofts and meadows are scattered, having doubtless been acquired piecemeal by the rich clothier; he had quite a considerable estate in Feering, copyhold land held from the manor of Feering Bury. This, together with a dairy house and a corn mill, with the land attached to each, and another house called 'Mr. Harleston's house,' all lying in Coggeshall, he left to Ann and Richard Bynnyon, his second daughter and son-in-law.

The will shows clearly also that Thomas Paycocke was still carrying on the family business. He describes himself as "Thomas Peaycoke of Coggeshall . . . Cloathemaker," and among his legacies are twenty shillings "to William Gyon my weaver," and the following interesting bequest: "Item I doe give seaven poundes tenne shillinges of Lawful money of Englande to and amongest Thirtie of the poorest Journeymen of the Fullers occupacion in Coggeshall aforesaide, That is to everye one of them fyve shillinges." Thomas' son-in-law, Thomas Tyll, came of a family of clothiers, for the name of William Tyll (then aged sixty-six years) occurs in 1575 among that of other clothiers, as signatory to a petition against a certain John Hastings, Esq., who, under colour of a patent granted to him for the making of 'ffreesadoes,' was interfering with their

industry of bays.[1] Moreover, in a certificate under date 1577 of wool bought by clothiers of Coggeshall during the past year, there occur the names of Thomas Tyll himself, John Gooddaye (to two of whose family Thomas Paycocke leaves legacies),[2] Robert Lytherland (who receives a considerable legacy under the will), Robert Jegon (who is mentioned incidentally as having a house near the church and who was the father of Robert Jegon, Bishop of Norwich), and the very William Gyon whom Thomas calls his weaver.[3] William indeed belonged to a well-known family of Coggeshall clothiers. He was related to a very rich clothier, Thomas Gyon or Guyon, baptized in 1592 and buried in 1664, who was said to have amassed £100,000 by the trade and who is found signing two petitions from the clothiers of Coggeshall to the Council of State in 1652. Two of his sons, Matthew and Mark Guyon, signed certain orders drawn up for the trade of clothiers, fullers, baymakers, and new drapers in Coggeshall about 1664.[4] The family afterwards held wide estates in Coggeshall and elsewhere. One of them, Charles Guyon, held the meadow called Cowleaze or Horseleaze and a dove house, just at the back of Paycocke's house, and sold it to Thomas Buxton some time before the latter made his will in 1705.[5] Another of them, Sarah Guyon, married John Buxton, Thomas' grandson, who was the last

[1] Beaumont, *Hist. of Coggeshall*, pp. 185–7, quotes the document from *State Papers, Domestic*, Eliz., vol. 106, no. 47.

[2] See below, p. 42.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 187, from *State Papers, Domestic*, vol. 114, no. 47.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 188–92. See also for the Guyon family pp. 209–10.

[5] Charles Louis Buxton, *The Buxtons of Coggeshall* (1910), p. 33.

of his name to live in Paycocke's and died five years after it was sold out of the family.[1]

Besides these good people engaged in clothmaking Thomas Paycocke's will mentions some members of his household; his two 'servauntes,' Thomas Hulman and John Walker, get three pounds each; his 'beere brewer,' John Fabyan (a member of a well-known Coggeshall family),[2] gets five pounds; his 'taylor,' John Gardiner, ten shillings. He mentions four men as 'my tennauntes,' William Lawraunce, John Heywarde, William Heywarde, and John Colman. Besides the larger legacies of land and money left to his immediate family, to his cousins the Motts, and to the Letherlands, there are a large number of small sums of money left to friends and dependents in the neighbourhood, and one has the impression that Thomas Paycocke was well liked by his fellows. That he was also a person of some consideration among the weightier folk and the gentry of the district would appear from the legacy: "unto all theis gentlemen and gentlewomen and other my frendes hereunder named, to everie one of them a Ringe of golde with a deathes hedd in it, to the valewe as it is sett and appointed to everye one of their names"; the names include, beside that of his cousin, John Paycocke, Mr. Henry Smythe "and my Cozen his wief," Mr. Mathewe Smythe, Mr. Thursbie and his wife, Mr. Thomas Geynes and his wife, Mr. Deraughe, Mr. Byngham, Mr. Holmestede and his wife, Mr. Spark of London, Mr. Davenaunte of London and his wife, Mr. Richard Woodwarde and his wife; likewise plain "William Vigorus of

[1] *The Buxtons of Coggeshall*, p. 44.

[2] Beaumont, *Hist. of Coggeshall*, pp. 78, 210–1.

Halsted" and his wife. Moreover, the will goes on, showing how wide was the acquaintance of the clothier of Coggeshall: "I doe give and bequeathe unto the Right Worshipfull Mr. Justice Southcote and unto the Right worshipfull S[r] William Cordell knight, M[aste]r of the Rolles, to euerye one of them Twentie poundes," with the humble request that they should act as overseers of his will and should determine any quarrel or difficulty which might arise concerning it, "according to theire wisdomes and discreations without anie suite of Lawe." Wise man.

It remains only to glance at the religious provisions of the will, which are interesting in comparison with those of the John Paycocke and the Thomas Paycocke who died when the old religion still held sway in England. Now, in 1580, the Reformation had swept over the country and had left its mark upon the wills of many inconsiderable folk; Thomas Paycocke, as befitted a sound old bourgeois, was a good Protestant. "I doe commende my soule," he says, "To oure Lorde Jesus Christe my maker and Savioure, by whose death and passion and his most precious blood sheddinge, I truste to have Remission of all my sinnes, and my soule to be saved thereby *and by none other meanes*." There is no talk here of little boys with candles, of month's minds, of obits and trentalls, of Diriges, of Requiems, of prayers for the dead; but Thomas Paycocke is as anxious as were his ancestors that he should have a worthy burial. He is to be buried with his family in St. Katharine's aisle (she no longer had an altar), with a fair stone over him. Mr. Newman, vicar of Coggeshall, is to have five pounds, "to make one Sermon at my buriall, and Fower more at his

pleasure afterwardes"; Mr. Wilton gets forty shillings to make two sermons; Master Henry Crane, parson of Ryvenhall, the same to make one sermon; Mr. Lewes, parson of Mark's Hall, the same to make two sermons, all in Coggeshall church. It was only the form of commemoration which was altered by the Reformation; the good folk of Coggeshall were not to be permitted to forget Thomas Paycocke any more than their forbears were permitted to forget his great-uncle and great-great-grandfather.

But they were given more than mere sermons as a memento. The old love of almsgiving, the care for the poor, had not died. Thomas leaves six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence to be bestowed among the poor people of Coggeshall at his burial. He provides also for the purchase of free lands and tenements to the value of two hundred pounds, for the relief of the poor of Coggeshall "to the ende of this uncertaine worlde." The money is to be distributed yearly in the form of fuel, to be given out between Easter and August, and white and red herrings, to be given out just before Lent. Thomas also bequeaths alms to the poor of all the neighbouring villages, Clare, Feering, Much Tey, Markshall, Earl's Colne, Halstead, Pattiswick, Stistead, Bradwell, Cressing, Rivenhall, Kelvedon, Inworth, Messing; and to the prisoners in the gaol of Colchester he leaves twenty shillings, to be divided among them in bread, meat, and drink, six shillings and eightpence being delivered to them every week for three weeks. This is the legacy commemorated on his tomb. It now consists of a sum of £3364, 12s. 8d. Consols, of which a sum equal to £500 sterling is used to maintain

scholarships called 'Paycocke's Scholarships' in the Hitcham School at Coggeshall, while the income of the rest of the trust is distributed in February in sums varying from 1s. to £1.[1]

This will is the last that we know of the Paycockes of Coggeshall; for with the death of Thomas' cousin, John, four years later, the honoured name came to an end. It will not be amiss, however, to say something here about another family, who are connected by marriage, and by the possession of the beautiful house, with the Paycockes.[2] The connexion began when Emma, the daughter of that Robert Paycocke who died in 1520, married Robert Buxton. This took place some time before 1537, for in that year her name occurs in a survey, recording the admission of Emma, "the wife of Robert Buxton and daughter of Robert Paycocke," to certain lands in the manor of Great Coggeshall, in the right of her father. It is probable that this Robert Buxton lived in Colchester, for the *Red Paper Book of Colchester* mentions a Robert Buxton as being on the Common Council in 1542 and a Robert Buxton, Junior, as dwelling there in 1534, and a "Johane Buckstone the daughter of Roberte and Emma" was baptized at St. Nicholas, Colchester, in 1543. Robert and Emma Buxton had, as appears from another survey, a daughter Ann, who married Charles Belfield and was still living in 1574. Meanwhile, however, there were other

[1] Beaumont, *Hist. of Coggeshall*, pp. 160–5, gives an account of Thomas Paycocke's Charity.

[2] For the following account of the Coggeshall Buxtons see Beaumont, *Paycocke's House*, pp. 7–8, and C. L. Buxton, *op. cit. passim.*

Buxtons living in Coggeshall, for the marriages of William (1561), Thomas (1562), and Robert (1601), and the burial of John (1568) are recorded in the Coggeshall parish registers. These Buxtons were contemporaries of the last Thomas Paycocke, and it is odd, considering the connexion with his family, that he does not mention them in his will. At this time the family does not seem to have been engaged in the trade of clothmaking, but in the seventeenth century this became the main occupation of the Coggeshall Buxtons. William Buxton, who died in 1625, describes himself in his will as "Clothyer of Coggeshall," and leaves to his son Thomas "all my Baye Lombs [Looms] with all the other furniture belonging to the Said Lombes." Thomas Buxton was seventeen when his father died, and lived until 1647, and is also described as 'clothier' in his will. He had a son also named Thomas Buxton, also a clothier, who died in 1713 and whose tomb stands in Coggeshall churchyard. His son, Isaac Buxton, who died in 1732, aged sixty, was a clothier likewise, and so were his two eldest sons, Thomas and Isaac; but soon after their father's death they retired from business, and the connexion of the Buxtons with the cloth manufacture came to an end.

It is not easy to establish how they first obtained possession of Paycocke's house; it was certainly in the possession of the Thomas Buxton who died in 1647. He, or his father William, may have bought it from John Paycocke's heirs or executors. By him it was handed down to his son, Thomas (d. 1713), and to the latter's son, Isaac (d. 1732). Isaac apparently allowed his third son, John, to

occupy the house as his tenant, and John was still living there in 1740. But Isaac had left the house by his will in 1732 to his youngest son, Samuel, and Samuel, dying in 1737, left it to his brother, Charles, the fourth son of Isaac. Charles, however, never lived in it. He spent most of his life in London, where he carried on the business of an oil merchant, though by his own wish he was buried among his ancestors in Coggeshall Church. In 1746 he most unfortunately sold the house to Robert Ludgater, and it passed completely out of the Paycocke-Buxton connexion until the present day, when it was bought and restored by Mr. Noel Buxton, a direct lineal descendant of Charles Buxton.

Nevertheless the outwork system was still the more common, and it is probable that the majority of Paycocke's workers lived in their own cottages in Coggeshall and the country round. But it is probable also that he had some looms in his own houses, perhaps in the long low room at the back, which is traditionally supposed to have been used for weaving, perhaps in a shed, or spinning-house, like John Baret's.

A highly idyllic picture of work in one of these miniature factories is contained in Deloney's *Pleasant History of Jack of Newbury*, but it must be remembered that it was a mere legend, even in relation to the great John Winchcombe, who certainly never had so many workers in his own house; and Thomas Paycocke probably had not a dozen workers on the premises. Still, the spirit of the ballad is the thing, and it is always a pleasant diversion to drop into poetry, even when one is not writing of *Decline-and-Fall-Off-The-Rooshan-Empire*:

> Within one roome, being large and long
> There stood two hundred Loomes full strong.
> Two hundred men, the truth is so,
> Wrought in these Loomes all in a row.
> By every one a pretty boy
> Sate making quills with mickle joy,
> And in another place hard by
> A hundred women merily
> Were carding hard with joyfull cheere
> Who singing sate with voyces cleere,
> And in chamber close beside
> Two hundred maidens did abide,
> In petticoats of Stammell red,
> And milk white kerchers on their head.
> Their smocke-sleeves like to winter snow,
> That on the Westerne mountaines flow,
> And each sleeve with a silken band
> Was featly tiêd at the hand.

These pretty maids did never lin
But in that place all day did spin,
And spinning so with voyces meet
Like nightingales they sang full sweet.
Then to another roome came they,
Where children were in poore aray:
And every one sate picking wool,
The finest from the course to cull:
The number was sevenscore and ten,
The children of poore silly men:
And these their labours to requite
Had every one a penny at night,
Beside their meat and drinke all day,
Which was to them a wondrous stay.
Within another place likewise
Full fifty proper men he spies,
And these were sheremen everyone,
Whose skill and cunning there was showne:
And hard by them there did remaine
Full four-score Rowers taking paine.
A Dye-house likewise had he then,
Wherein he kept full forty men:
And likewise in his Fulling Mill
Full twenty persons kept he still.
Each weeke ten good fat oxen he
Spent in his house for certaintie,
Beside good butter, cheese and fish
And many another wholesome dish.
He kept a Butcher all the yeere,
A Brewer eke for Ale and Beere;
A Baker for to bake his Bread,
Which stood his hushold in good stead.
Five Cookes within his kitchin great
Were all the yeare to dress his meat.
Six Scullion boyes vnto their hands,
To make clean dishes, pots and pans,
Beside poore children that did stay
To turne the broaches every day.
The old man that did see this sight,
Was much amaz'd, as well he might:
This was a gallant Cloathier sure,
Whose fame for ever shall endure.[1]

[1] *Deloney's Works*, ed. F. O. Mann, pp. 20–1.

tenne shillinges." The hurrying, scattering generation of to-day can hardly imagine the immovable stability of the village of past centuries, when generation after generation grew from cradle to grave in the same houses, on the same cobbled streets, and folk of the same name were still friends, as their fathers and grandfathers had been before them.

Other friends and employees of Thomas Paycocke also had their legacies. He leaves 6s. 8d. to Humphrey Stonor, 'somtyme my prentis.' May we perhaps see Humphrey Stonor, with sleepy eyes making his way downstairs on a frosty morning, from those huge raftered attics, where a lover and housekeeper of *Paycocke's* once assured me that the prentices used to sleep? He was on terms of impudent friendship, no doubt, with the weavers and fullers, whom his master set to work. Two of these got substantial legacies; apparently Thomas Paycocke had lent them money, and wished to wipe out the debt upon his death-bed, for, says the will, "I bequethe to John Beycham, my weyver, v li and [if] there be so moch bitwene vs and ells to mak it vpp v li, and a gowne and a doublett . . . I bequeth and forgive Robert Taylor, fuller, all that is betwixt vs, and more I give him iij s. iiij d." Other legacies show even more clearly that his operations were on a large scale: "I bequeth to all my wevers, ffullers and shermen that be not afore Rehersed by name xij d. apece, And will they that haue wrought me verey moch wark haue iij s. iiij d. apece. Item I bequethe to be distributed amonge my kembers, Carders and Spynners Summa iiij li." Weavers, fullers, and shearmen,

combers, carders, and spinners—here are all the branches of the cloth industry at a glance :

> First the Parter that doth neatly cull
> The finer from the courser sort of wool.
> The Dyer then in order next doth stand
> With sweating brow and a laborious hand.
> With oil they then asperge it, which being done,
> The careful hand of Mixers round it run.
> The Stockcarder his arms doth hard imploy
> (Remembering Friday is our Market day).
> The knee-carder doth (without controule)
> Quickly convert it to a lesser roule.
> Which done, the Spinster doth in hand it take
> And of two hundred roules one threed doth make.
> The Weaver next doth warp and weave the chain,
> Whilst Puss his cat stands mewing for a skaine ;
> But he, laborious with his hands and heeles,
> Forgets his Cat and cries, Come boy with queles.
> Being fill'd, the Brayer doth it mundifie
> From oyle and dirt that in the same doth lie,
> The Burler then (yea, thousands in this place)
> The thick-set weed with nimble hand doth chase.
> The Fuller then close by his stock doth stand,
> And will not once shake Morpheus by the hand.
> The Rower next his armes lifts up on high,
> And near him sings the Shearman merrily.
> The Drawer last, that many faults doth hide
> (Whom merchant nor the weaver can abide)
> Yet is he one in most clothes stops more holes
> Than there be stairs to the top of Paul's.[1]

It is Thomas Paycocke, clothier, round whom the whole manufacture revolves. He gives the wool to the women to comb it and card it and spin it ; he receives it from them again and gives it to the weaver to be woven into cloth ; he gives the cloth to the fuller to be fulled and to the dyer

[1] Extract from Richard Watts' "Concise Poem on Shepton Mallet" (*The Young Man's Looking Glass*, 1641), quoted in Salzmann, *op. cit.* pp. 142–3.

to be dyed; and having received it when finished, he has it made up into dozens; and he sends it off to the wholesale dealer, the draper, who sells it; perhaps he has been wont to send it to that very 'Thomas Perpoint, draper,' whom he calls 'my cosyn' and makes his executor. The whole of Thomas Paycocke's daily business is implicit in his will. In the year of his death he was still employing a large number of workers and on friendly and benevolent terms with them. The building of his house had not signalized his retirement from business, as happened when another great clothier, Thomas Dolman, gave up cloth-making and the weavers of Newbury went about lamenting:

Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners,
Thomas Dolman has built a new house and turned away all his spinners.[1]

One detail, indeed, the will does not give us, which we should be glad to know. Did Thomas Paycocke employ only domestic weavers working in their own houses, or did he also keep a certain number of looms working in his house? A fellow-clothier, John Baret of Bury St. Edmunds, considerately mentions in his will 'a spinning-house' adjoining the garden of his house in Bury, and it is clear that he kept workpeople there.[2] It has already been mentioned as characteristic of this period that something like a miniature factory system was establishing itself in the midst of the

[1] Quoted in Lipson, *op. cit.* p. 421.

[2] For an account of this man's will see R. H. Gretton, *The English Middle Class*, pp. 86–90.

new outwork system. The clothiers were beginning to set up looms in their own houses and to work them by journeyman weavers; as a rule, the independent weavers greatly disliked the practice, for either they were forced from the position of free masters into that of hired servants, obliged to go and work in the clothier's loom-shop, or else they found their payment forced down by the competition of the journeymen. Moreover, the clothiers sometimes owned and let out looms to their workpeople, and then also part of the industrial independence of the weaver was lost. All through the first half of the sixteenth century the weavers in the cloth districts kept on petitioning Parliament against this new evil of capitalism. It was as though, long before it established itself in England, they had a prevision of the factory system and of the worker no longer owning either his raw material, or his workshop, or his tool, or the product of his industry, but only his labour; the master weaver become a hired hand. Certainly the practice was growing in Essex, where some twenty years after Thomas Paycocke's death, the weavers petitioned against the clothiers, who had their own looms and weavers and fullers in their own houses, so that the petitioners were rendered destitute; "for the rich men, the clothiers, be concluded and agreed among themselves to hold and pay one price for weaving of the said cloths," a price too small to support their households, even if they worked day and night, holy day and work day, so that many of them lost their independence and were reduced to become other men's servants.[1]

[1] Quoted in Lipson, *op. cit.* p. 417.

THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

CHAPTER III

THOMAS PAYCOCKE OF COGGESHALL
(D. 1518)

> This was a gallant cloathier sure,
> Whose fame for ever shall endure.
>
> THOMAS DELONEY

THOMAS PAYCOCKE, clothier, the first dweller in the house, may stand as typical of his class. His will and his house together tell us much about him, and more still can be gleaned from an analogy with the great clothiers, his compeers, some of whom were also his contemporaries. Thomas Paycocke was perhaps acquainted with his namesake, Thomas Spring of Lavenham (d. 1524), whom men called 'the rich clothier,' and who helped to build the steeple of the lovely church of Lavenham.[1] He must also have heard of the famous John Winchcombe, who died only one year after Paycocke himself, leaving a will very similar in its legacies to servants in the industry and to Newbury parish church.

These were the giants of the trade, and no one wrote ballads about Thomas Paycocke, whose business was on a smaller scale. Yet his house and his will bear witness to an industry similar to that of

[1] For the Springs of Lavenham see E. M. Dewing, "Notes on Lavenham Church and Parish" (*Suffolk Instit. of Archæol.*, vii. 1888), p. 107.

Spring of Lavenham and Jack of Newbury. The merchant's mark, a two-stemmed clover, which stamped his bales of cloth, appears on his carved ceilings, his fireplaces, and the frieze along the front of the house. His will is more specific still. To whom beside his family does he leave legacies of money? To the good folk of the neighbourhood who worked for him. There is the Goodday family of cheerful name; two of them were Shearmen, or cloth finishers, and to them he left substantial gifts, "I bequeth to Thomas Goodday Sherman xx s. and ych of his childryn iij s. iiij d. apece. Item I bequeth to Edward Goodday Sherman xvj s. viij d. and to his child iij s. iiij d." He also left money to Robert Goodday of Sampford and to Robert's brother, John, and to each of Robert's sisters, with something extra for Grace, who was his goddaughter; and he did not forget Nicholas Goodday of Stisted and Robert Goodday of Coggeshall and their families; nor their relative, John, who was a priest at 'Byeley,'[1] and had ten shillings for a trentall. All these Gooddays were doubtless bound to Thomas Paycocke by ties of work as well as of friendship. They belonged to a well-known Coggeshall family, for generations connected with the cloth industry.[2] Thomas Paycocke's namesake, and grand-nephew, whose will is dated 1580, was still (as we saw) in close relations with them. He left "to Edwarde Goodaye my godson Fourtie shillinges and to every brother and sister the saide Edwarde hath livinge at the tyme of my decease tenne shillinges a pece" and "unto William Gooday thelder

[1] Perhaps Beeleigh Abbey, Maldon.

[2] See above, p. 37.

The private life of Thomas Paycocke, no less than his business, can be made to live again. Of his family the invaluable will tells us a little. His first wife was that Margaret whose initials, together with his own, decorate the woodwork of the house. Indeed, Mr. Beaumont makes the happy conjecture that old John Paycocke built the house for the young couple on their wedding. Gay, indeed, must have been the sights which it witnessed on that happy day, for our ancestors knew how to put their hearts into a wedding, and Merry England was never merrier than when the bridegroom led home the bride. We may borrow once again from Deloney's idyll, to recreate the scene :

> " The Bride being attyred in a gowne of sheepes russet and a kertle of fine woosted, her head attyred with a billiment of gold and her haire as yeallow as gold hanging downe behinde her, which was curiously combed and pleated, according to the manner in those dayes ; shee was led to Church betweene two sweete boyes, with Bridelaces and Rosemary tied about their silken sleeves. Then was there a fair Bride-cup of silver and gilt carried before her, wherein was a goodly branch of Rosemary gilded very faire, hung about with silken Ribands of all colours ; next was there a noyse of Musicians that played all the way before her : after her came all the chiefest maydens of the Country, some bearing great Bride Cakes and some Garlands of wheate finely gilded and so she past vnto the Church.

> It is needlesse for mee to make any mention here of the Bridegroome, who being a man so well beloued, wanted no company and those of the best sort, beside diuers Marchant strangers of the Stillyard that came from London to the Wedding. The marriage being solemnized, home they came in order as before and to dinner they went where was no want of good cheare, no lack of melody. . . . The wedding endured ten dayes, to the great reliefe of the poore that dwelt all about." [1]

Much dancing the house doubtless saw under the beautiful carved roof of the hall, with much song, games, kissing, and general abandon. Even when the bride and groom retired to the bridal chamber with its roll-moulded beams the merry-making was not done; they must hold a levee to their nearest friends in the bedchamber itself, enthroned in the great four-poster bed. There was no false delicacy about our ancestors. Indeed, as Henry Bullinger says (he was a very different person from the jovial Deloney, but he was a contemporary of Paycocke's and Coverdale translated him, so let him speak): "After supper must they begynne to pype and daunce agayne of the new. And though the yonge parsones, beynge weery of the bablyng noyse and inconuenience, come ones towarde theyr rest, yet can they haue no quietnesse. For a man shall fynd unmanerly & restlesse people, that will first go to theyr chambre dore and there syng vycious and naughtie balates that the deuell maye haue his triumphe

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 22.

now to the vttermost." [1] What would we not give for one of those 'naughty ballads' to-day?

The bride, Margaret, who was thus merrily brought home to Coggeshall, came from Clare, the ancient home of the Paycocke family. The Coggeshall Paycockes, as is plain from their wills, never severed their connexion with Suffolk. Thomas leaves several legacies to churches and religious houses and for the repair of highways in the district where other members of his family held, or had held, land; and in Clare itself he left 20s. to the Grey Friars, 10s. to the parish church, and the large sum of £20 to repair the 'foul ways' between Clare and Ovington. So old John Paycocke, his father, had left money to the friars of Clare; and so Thomas Paycocke, his grand-nephew, was to leave alms to the poor of Clare. Margaret Paycocke was the daughter of one Thomas Horrold of Clare, for whose memory Paycocke retained a lively affection and respect, for in founding a chantry in Coggeshall church he desired specially that it should be for the souls of himself and his wife, his mother and father and his father-in-law, Thomas Horrold of Clare. He also left £5, with which his executors were "to purvey an oder stone to be hade to Clare chirch and layd on my ffader in lawe Thomas Horrold w[t] his pycture and his wife and childryn theron" (*i.e.* a memorial brass); and also five cows or else £3 in money to Clare church "to kepe and mayntene my ffader in lawe Thomas Horrold his obitt." Other members of the Horrold family are mentioned in the will,

[1] Henry Bullinger, quoted in C. L. Powell, *English Domestic Relations, 1487–1653* (1917), p. 27.

but not without a hint of some family disturbance. Paycocke leaves £5 to Thomas Horrold of Clare "and to Margery and Margarete the susters to the said Thomas Horrold, to yche of them x li apece, and yf the forsaid Margery or Margarete dye or they come to Mariage, I will myne executors dispose it for my Soule, and yf the said Margery make any besynes and trobyll with myn executors I will hir parte be oderwise bestowed by myne executors." Who were Thomas and Margery and Margaret? Were they (as one would suppose) the children of old Thomas Horrold, 'my ffader in lawe,' and the brother and sisters of Margaret Paycocke? And if so, how came it that there were *two* Margarets in the Horrold family and a Margery to boot? And why was Margery likely to make trouble over the will? Was she simply a shrew, or had she misliked Paycocke's second marriage? We shall never know; but we may permit ourselves to think of our good clothier piously preserving his father-in-law's memory in his heart, and knitting his brow at times over a tiresome lass called Margery.

Margaret Paycocke died before her husband and without children; and the only young folk of his name whom Thomas ever saw at play in his lofty hall, or climbing upon his dresser to find the head as small as a walnut hidden in the carving of the ceiling, were his nephews and nieces: Robert and Margaret Uppcher, his sister's children; John, the son of his brother, John; and Thomas, Robert, and Emma, the children of his brother, Robert; perhaps also his little godchild, Grace Gooday. It was perhaps in the hope of a son to whom he might

leave his house and name that Thomas Paycocke married again a girl called Ann Cotton. She was the wife of his old age, "Anne my good wif," and her presence must have made bright the beautiful house, silent and lonely since Margaret died. Her father, George Cotton, is mentioned in the will, and her brothers and sister, Richard and William and Eleanor, have substantial legacies. But Thomas and Ann enjoyed only a short term of married life; she brought him his only child, but death overtook him before it was born. In his will he provides carefully for Ann; she is to have 500 marks sterling, and as long as she lives the beautiful house is to be hers; for to his elaborate arrangements for its inheritance he adds, "provided alwey that my wif Ann haue my house I dwell in while she lyvyth at hir pleyser and my dof house [dove house] with the garden y^{t} stoundeth in."

So much we know of Thomas Paycocke's wives. Of his personal character we can guess something too. He was obviously a kind and benevolent employer, as his thought for his workpeople and their children shows. He was often asked to stand godfather to the babies of Coggeshall, for in his will he directs that at his burial and the ceremonies which were repeated on the seventh day and 'month day' after it there were to be "xxiiij or xij smale childryn in Rochettes with tapers in theire hands and as many as may be of them lett them be my god childryn and they to haue vj s. viij d. apece and euery oder child iiij d. apece . . . and also euery god chyld besyde vj s. viij d. apece." That he had many friends not only in Coggeshall but in the villages round, the number of his legacies

bears witness. His will also shows that he was a man of deep religious feeling. He was a brother of the Crutched Friars of Colchester, and left them on his death £5 to pray "for me and for them that I am bound to pray fore." It was customary in the Middle Ages for monastic houses to give the privilege of the fraternity of the house to benefactors and persons of distinction; the reception took place at a long and elaborate ceremony, during which the *confrater* received the kiss of peace from all the brethren. It is a mark of the respect in which Thomas Paycocke was held in the countryside that he should have been made a brother by the Crutched Friars. He seems to have had a special kindness for the order of Friars; he leaves the Grey Friars of Colchester and the Friars of Maldon, Chelmsford, and Sudbury each 10s. for a trentall and 3s. 4d. to repair their houses; and to the Friars of Clare (the town which after Coggeshall he most loved, as the ancient home of the Paycockes and the home of his wife's family) he left 20s. for two trentalls "and at Lent after my deceste a kade of Rede heryng." He had great interest in Coggeshall Abbey; it lay less than a mile from his house and he must often have dined in state with the abbot at his guest table on feast days, and attended mass in the abbey church. He remembered the Abbey as he lay dying, and the sound of its bells ringing for vespers came softly in at his window on the mellow September air; and he left "my Lord Abbot and Convent" one of his famous broadcloths and 4*l.* in money "for to have a dirige and Masse and their belles Ryngyng at my buriall when it is doon at Chirdre, lykewyse

the vijth day and mounth day, with iij tryntalls upon the same day yf they can serve them, orells [or else] when they can at more leasur, Summa x li."

His piety is shown also in his bequests to the churches of Bradwell, Pattiswick, and Markshall, parishes adjacent to Coggeshall, and to Stoke Naylond, Clare, Poslingford, Ovington, and Beauchamp St. Paul's across the Essex border, in the district from which the Paycockes originally came. But his greatest care was naturally for Coggeshall church. One of the Paycockes had probably built the north aisle, where the altar was dedicated to St. Catharine, and all the Paycocke tombs lay there. Thomas Paycocke left instructions in his will that he should be buried before St. Catharine's altar, and made the following gifts to the church: "Item, I bequeth to the high aulter of Coxhall Chirche in recompence of tithes and all oder thyngs forgoten Summa iiij li. Item I bequethe to a Tabernacle of the Trenyte at the high awlter and an other of Seint Margarete in seint Katryne Ile [aisle] there as the greate Lady stonds for carvyng and gildyng of them summa c. marcs sterlinge. Item to the reparacons of the Chirch and bells and for my lying in the Chirche Summa c. nobles." He founded a chantry there also in memory of himself and his wife, his father and mother, his father-in-law Thomas Horrold of Clare, and all his friends for whose souls he was bound to pray; and left money to be given weekly to six poor men to attend mass in his chantry thrice a week, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Of piety and of family pride these legacies to

religious houses and to churches speak clearly. Another series of legacies, which take a form characteristic of medieval charity, bears witness perhaps to Thomas Paycocke's habits. He must often have ridden abroad; to see the folk who worked for him in the villages round Coggeshall, or to visit his friends; or—farther afield—to Clare, first to see the home of his ancestors (where some of his family were doubtless still settled), then to court Margaret Horrold, his bride, and then, with Margaret beside him, to visit his well-loved father-in-law. Certainly whether he walked to church in Coggeshall, or whether he rode along the country lanes, he often sighed over the state of the road as he went; often he must have struggled through torrents of mud in winter, or stumbled among holes in summer. For in the Middle Ages the care of the roads was a matter for private or ecclesiastical charity, and all except the great highways were likely to be but indifferently kept. Langland in his *Piers Plowman* mentions the amending of 'wikked wayes' as one of those works of charity which rich merchants must do for the salvation of their souls. Thomas Paycocke's choice of roads no doubt reflects many a wearisome journey, from which he returned home splashed and testy, to the ministrations of "John Reyner my man" or "Henry Briggs my servant," and of Margaret, looking anxiously from her oriel window for his return. In his own town he leaves no less than £40, of which £20 was to go to amend a section of West Street (where stood his house), and £20 was "to be layde on the fowle wayes bitwene Coxhall and Blackwater where as moost nede ys"; he had doubtless

experienced the evils of this road on his way to the Abbey. Farther afield, he leaves £20 for the 'fowle way' between Clare and Ovington and another £20 for the road between Ovington and Beauchamp St. Paul's.

As his life drew to its close, he doubtless rode less often afield. The days would pass peacefully for him; his business flourished and he was everywhere loved and respected. He took pride in his lovely house, adding bit by bit to its beauties. In the cool of the evening he must often have stood outside the garden room and seen the monks from the big abbey fishing in their stewpond across the field, or lifted his eyes to where the last rays of sun slanted onto the lichened roof of the great barn and onto the rows of tenants, carrying their tithes of corn along the road; and he reflected, perhaps, that John Mann and Thomas Spooner, his own tenants, were good, steady friends and that it were well to leave them a gown or a pound when he died. Often also in his last year or two, he must have sat with his wife in his garden with the dove-house and watched the white pigeons circling round the apple trees and smiled upon her bed of flowers. And in winter evenings sometimes he would take his furred cloak and stroll to the Dragon Inn; and Edward Aylward, the host, would welcome him with bows; and so he would sit and drink a tankard of sack with his neighbours, very slow and dignified, as befitted the greatest clothier of the town, and looking benevolently upon the company. But at times he would frown, if he saw a truant monk from the abbey stolen out for a drink in spite of all the prohibitions of bishop and abbot; shaking his head,

perhaps, and complaining that religion was not what it had been in the good old days; but not meaning much of it, as his will shows, and never dreaming that twenty years after his death abbot and monks would be scattered and the king's servants would be selling at auction the lead from off the roof of Coggeshall Abbey; never dreaming that after four hundred years his house would still stand, mellow and lovely, with its carved ceiling and its proud merchant's mark, when the abbey church was only a shadow on the surface of a field in hot weather and all the abbey buildings were shrunk to one ruined ambulatory, ignobly sheltering blue Essex hay wagons from the rain.

So Thomas Paycocke's days drew to a close amid the peace and beauty of the most English of counties, "fatt, frutefull and full of profitable thinges." There came a day in September when gloom hung over the streets of Coggeshall, when the spinning-wheels were silent in the cottages, and spinners and weavers stood in anxious little groups outside the beautiful house in West Street; for upstairs in his bridal chamber, under its noble ceiling, the great clothier lay dying; and his wife wept by his bedside, knowing that he would never see his child. A few days later the cottages were deserted again; and a concourse of weeping people followed Thomas Paycocke to his last rest. The ceremony of his burial befitted his dignity: it comprised services, not only on the burial day itself, but on the seventh day after it, and then again after a month had passed. It is given best in the words of his will: for Thomas Paycocke followed the custom of his time in giving his

executors elaborate injunctions for his funeral rites. "I will myne executors bestowe vpon my buryng daye, vij day and mounthe daye after this manner: At my buriall to have a tryntall of prests and to be at dirige, lawdis [lauds] and comendacons as many of them as may be purveyed that day to serve the tryntall, and yf eny lack to make it vpp the vijth daye, And at the Mounthe daye an oder tryntall to be purveyed hoole of myne executors and to kepe dirige, lawdis and commendacons as is afore reherssed, with iij high massis be note [by note, *i.e.* with music], oon of the holy gost, an other of oure lady, and an other of Requiem, both buriall, seuenth day and Mounthe daye. And prests beyng at this obseruance iiij d. at euery tyme and Childryn at euery tyme ij d., w^{t} torches at the buriall xij, and vj at the vijth day and xij at the mounthe daye, with xxiiij^{ti} or xij smale Childryn in Rochettes with tapers in theire honds, and as many as may be of them lett them be my god Childryn and they to haue vj s. viij d. apece; and euery oder child iiij d. apece; and euery man that holdith torches at euery day he to haue ij apece; and euery man, woman and child that holdeth upp hound at eny of thes iij days to haue j d. apece; And also euery god chyld besyde vj s. viij d. apece; and to the Ryngars for all iij dayes x s.; and for mete, drynke and for twoo Semones of a doctor, and also to haue a dirige at home or I be borne to the Chirche summa j^{li}."

Over £500 in modern money was expended upon the burial ceremonies of Thomas Paycocke, beside the foundation of his new chantry. Well indeed it was that his eyes were closed in death ere the

coming of the Reformation abolished all the chantries of England, and with them the Paycocke chantry in St. Catharine's aisle, which had provided alms for six poor men weekly, as recompense for attending the services before St. Catharine's altar. Thomas Paycocke belonged to the good old days; in a quarter of a century after his death Essex was already changing; the monks were scattered from the abbey, which stood roofless; the sonorous Latin tongue no longer echoed in the church, nor priests prayed there for the souls of Thomas and his wife and his parents and his father-in-law; even the clothmaking industry was changing and the county was growing more prosperous still with the advent of finer kinds of cloth, the new drapery brought there by feat-fingered aliens. Thomas Paycocke did not have to trouble his head with "arras, bays, bewpers, boulters, boratoes, buffins, bustyans, bombacyes, blankets, callimancoes, carrells, chambletts, cruell, dornicks, duraunce, damask, frisadoes, fringe, fustyans, felts, flanells, grograines, garterings, girdlings, linsey woolseyes, mockadoes, minikins, mountaines, makerells, oliotts, pomettes, plumettes perpetuanas, perpicuanas, rashes, rugges, russells, sattins, serges, syettes, sayes, stamells, stamines, scallops, tukes, tamettes, tobines and valures,"[1] all of which portents flourished in the Eastern counties in the days of his grand-nephews. One thing, however, did not change, for Thomas Paycocke's beautiful house still stood in West Street, opposite the vicarage, and was the delight of all who looked upon it. It stands there still.

[1] Quoted in Salzmann, *op. cit.* p. 170.

CHAPTER IV

PAYCOCKE'S HOUSE, COGGESHALL

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Fade into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing.

KEATS

PAYCOCKE'S house in Coggeshall is perhaps one of the best examples in the whole of East Anglia of the house of a rich member of the middle class in the fifteenth century. Domestic architecture, if it has not the grandeur of medieval military and ecclesiastical architecture, has a peculiar charm of its own—the charm of old houses, whose very walls seem to be impregnated with past lives. They take on something of the sense and spirit of humanity, as the potter's hand is subdued to what it works in. They are submitted to a unique intimacy, by which they must perforce retain something essential of the lives which have been lived under their benevolent shelter. That is why old manor-houses, set in their gardens, old town-houses standing on a village street, are kinder things to live in than new houses, however beautiful; as to those monotonous monstrosities run up in rows by the jerry builder, those new-art villas, all roof and no windows, we need not dignify them by the name of houses. A house

is like a pipe; it needs to be seasoned. If it welcome you when you enter its hall, if its rafters re-echo gaily as though they laughed with you, if peace come dropping slow in its bedrooms, if it seem just to have stopped speaking to you when you wake, if sunlight and twilight and firelight seem equally the best light of all for its panels, its corners, its great beams—then it is a seasoned house. Years of humanity have wrought it to that pitch of sympathy.

For a house is not like a landscape or a cathedral, beautiful in itself and eternally right, irrespective of the atom of humanity whose transient gaze beholds it. A house is only beautiful and right in use; to be good to live in is an intrinsic part of its beauty. So it is that beautiful houses, preserved from decay by being turned into museums, lose half their charm and seem mutely to beseech the visitor for a fire in the ingle nook, a steaming dish, the whisper of two friends upon the hearth, to remove the veil which hides their features. To keep a house as a museum is to keep the fleet camel of the desert to give rides to children in an English zoo. One supposes that there must be zoos and museums; yet what more ungrateful repayment to the house which has sheltered a great man than to dehumanize it for ever for its pains? And how infinitely worse when it is an old house, which hates above all else fleeting tenants, and likes its families rooted deeply in its floors, from generation to generation going forth and coming in at the same door.

Paycocke's house is one of those seasoned houses. Whoever enters it knows at once that generations

have lived there. It is nothing so crude as the mere capacity to call up an image of Thomas Paycocke, in the correct doublet, or of John Buxton, in the correct hat, standing before its vast fireplaces, nor even to see the children of three centuries popping like rabbits in and out of the little doorway in the big linen-fold gates. It is simply that the house is drenched with humanity, so that you can live alone in it for weeks and not feel lonely. It is busy with its thoughts all round you, turning over and over again its memories; and yet, like a good house, never forgetting its inmate, never forgetting that you are there to be sheltered and friended by it. Those same carvings on a rood screen (whence perhaps the three ornamented panels in the panel room came), those beams stretched across the roof of a church might awe you, but you need never feel shy of Paycocke's; it knows its business too well; and only a less perfect and less seasoned house would allow you to feel an intruder in the home of Thomas Paycocke. Besides, it is safe now for ever, back in the hands of its ancient masters, and those who sit beneath its roof are no strangers to it, but children of its children. It knows the root from which they grew.

These beauties are of the spirit. But it has no lack of the superficial beauties, which even the most casual visitor can see. Thomas Paycocke has somehow stamped himself upon it; and Thomas Paycocke was *nouveau riche* in an age when to be *nouveau riche* was to like elaboration, but not vulgarity. His prosperity has blossomed out into exquisitely ornate decoration. A band of carving runs along the front of the house, and from the

curved stem of it branch out a hundred charming details, leaves, tendrils, strange flowers, human heads, Tudor roses, a crowned king and queen lying hand in hand, a baby, diving with a kick of fat legs into the bowl of an arum lily; and in the midst the merchant's mark upon a shield and the initials of the master of the house. In the hall is a ceiling of carved oakwork, as beautiful as anything in the country, extremely elaborate, and bearing at intervals the merchant's mark again, and the initials T. P. and M. P. for Thomas Paycocke and his bride. Upstairs in the big bedchamber is a ceiling of beams worked in bold roll-mouldings, less elaborate but even grander and more beautiful than those of the hall. In the eastern half of the house is an exquisite little room, lined with linen-fold panels, and here, as well as upstairs in the second bedroom, are breastsummers carved with queer animals, to delight generations of Paycocke and Buxton boys and girls.

Some time after the house was built, Thomas Paycocke, or perhaps his nephew, John, bethought him that it was inconvenient not to be able to get to the back of the house except by passing through it; so a passage or cart way was cut through the eastermost room and the great linen-fold gates were set up, with their guardian figures, a fool with ass-eared cap and baton (from which the bladders have now disappeared), such as you may see any day in old woodcuts of Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools*, and a mummer with a shield. After that the carts with their bales of wool, and the village women with their thread, could clatter through to the weaving-room and no one was disturbed.

THE PANELLED ROOM

About this time, too, Thomas or John lined with its linen-fold panels the eastern room. It was John, perhaps, who put in the three panels of carved ecclesiastical-looking work; it may be that he had it from the rood screen of the abbey church, on that melancholy day when bluff Harry's servants sold it all at auction, and so much that was lovely was cast away and burned and lost to the world. All was grist to John's mill, if it served to make more beautiful his beautiful house; and everywhere the house tells the same tale of men who were prosperous and who liked to display their prosperity in an adornment for all men to see. The house is entirely characteristic of its owners; it is essentially of its era and of its class.

Essentially also it is of its country-side; oak and clay are what Essex houses have been made of for more years than can be counted. It is still full of oak-beamed, pargetted cottages, and Coggeshall is richer than most villages in old houses, which have stood nearly as long as Paycocke's itself. The whole village has the homeliness, the calm of the house. And the whole country-side has it too. Here are no wild beauties of forest and mountain, but the most English of landscapes, all little rolling hills and dales, great elms and large clouded skies. All who have praised the beauties of Essex (and they are not many, for this is none of your flashy, melodramatic counties, which he who runs may read, and, reading, plant a week-end villa on its hill-sides or leave a ginger-beer bottle in its woods), all who have praised this shire have been struck by the same things, by its rich comfort, its homeliness, its peace. "This shire," says Norden

in 1594, "is the most fatt, frutefull and full of profitable thinges, exceeding (as far as I can finde) anie other shire for the generall commodities and the plentie, thowgh Suffolk be more highlie comended by some (wherewith I am not yet acquainted). But this shire seemeth to me to deserve the title of the Englishe Goshen, the fattest of the lande, comparable to Palestina that flowed with milk and hunnye." [1] So likewise Drayton in 1662 :

> Essex is our dower, which greatly doth abound
> With every simple good that in the isle is found.

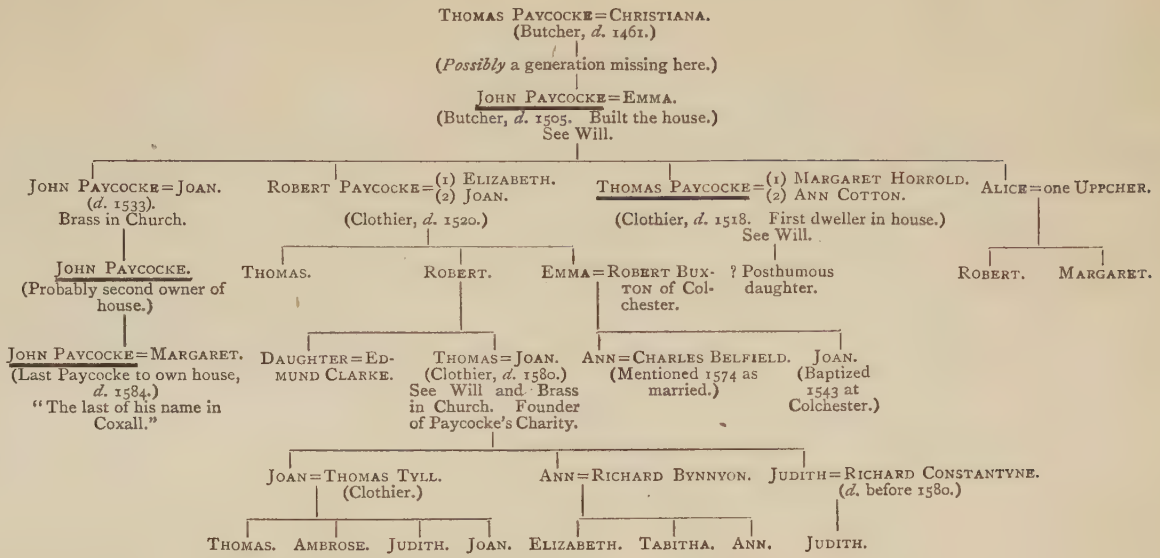
So again Arthur Shirley Cripps in our own time :

> England has greater counties—
> Their peace to hers is small.
> Low hills, rich fields, calm rivers,
> In Essex seek them all,—
> Essex where I that found them
> Found them to lose them all!

Is it not the very setting for such rich and peaceful beauty as that of Paycocke's house? Is it not the very setting also for the quiet, deep-rooted lives of the Paycockes and the Buxtons, who dwelt there in a happier past, "rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations"?

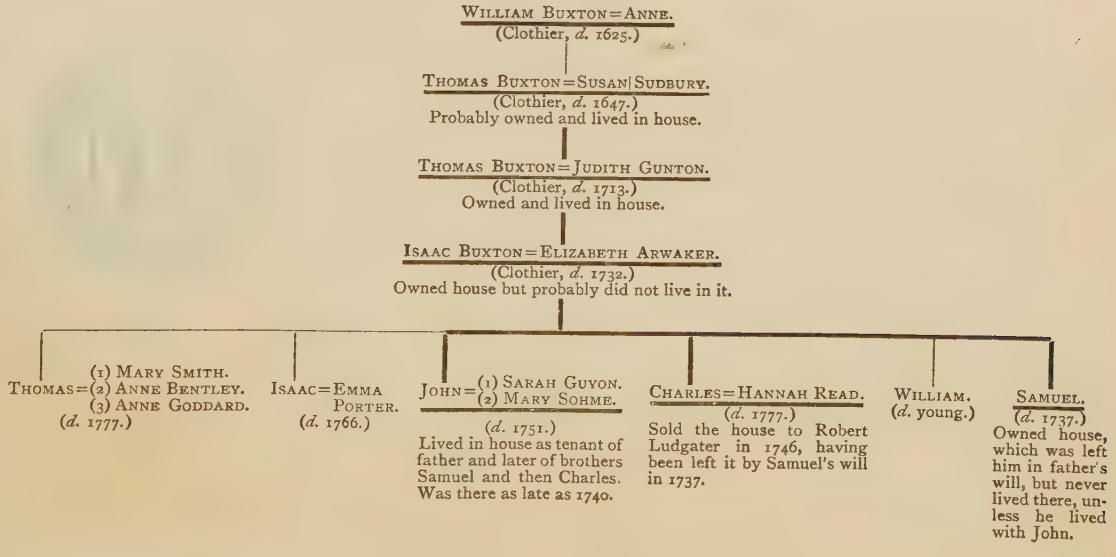
[1] Norden, *Description of Essex* (1594) ("Camden Soc."), p. 7.

APPENDIX I.—PEDIGREE OF THE PAYCOCKES OF COGGESHALL



Owners of the house underlined.

APPENDIX II.—THE BUXTON PEDIGREE IN SO FAR AS IT CONCERNS THE HOUSE


WILLIAM BUXTON=ANNE.
(Clothier, d. 1625.)
THOMAS BUXTON=SUSAN SUDBURY.
(Clothier, d. 1647.)
Probably owned and lived in house.
THOMAS BUXTON=JUDITH GUNTON.
(Clothier, d. 1713.)
Owned and lived in house.
ISAAC BUXTON=ELIZABETH ARWAKER.
(Clothier, d. 1732.)
Owned house but probably did not live in it.
THOMAS=(1) MARY SMITH. (2) ANNE BENTLEY. (3) ANNE GODDARD.
(d. 1777.)
ISAAC=EMMA PORTER.
(d. 1766.)
JOHN=(1) SARAH GUYON. (2) MARY SOHME.
(d. 1751.)
Lived in house as tenant of father and later of brothers Samuel and then Charles. Was there as late as 1740.
CHARLES=HANNAH READ.
(d. 1777.)
Sold the house to Robert Ludgater in 1746, having been left it by Samuel's will in 1737.
WILLIAM.
(d. young.)
SAMUEL.
(d. 1737.)
Owned house, which was left him in father's will, but never lived there, unless he lived with John.

Owners and Dwellers in the house underlined.

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